

Putting on a Successful Volunteer Trail Care Event



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New England Mountain Bike Association

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Our mission is to promote recreational trail opportunities, care for public trail systems, provide resources to land management agencies, and preserve open space

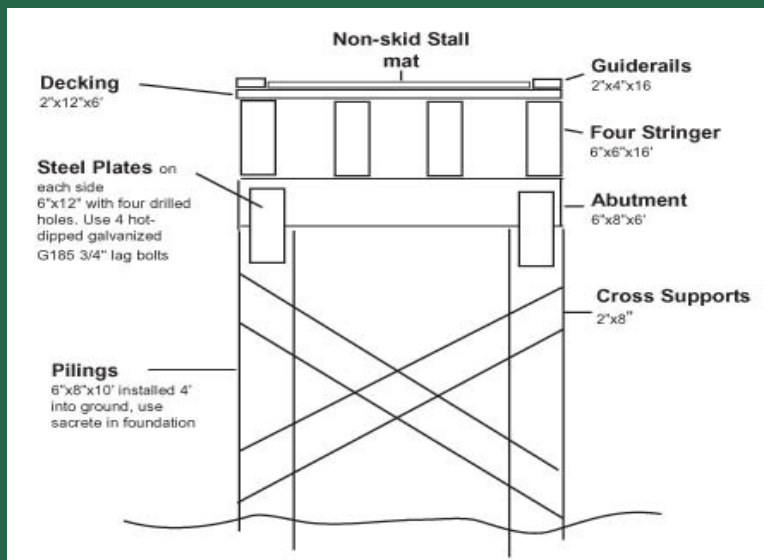
WWW.NEMBA.ORG



PLANNING



- Work with Land Manager to develop a list of projects that meet DCR goals -- Evaluate and prioritize projects.
- Sponsorship or grant opportunities? ConsCom approvals? Developing public/private partnerships (say, with EMS, REI or other local business) is a good way to get more visibility and more volunteers
- Estimate how much time each project will take and how many volunteers you'll need. Be realistic
- Develop a regular schedule, perhaps first Sunday of every month



Event Planning



- Site visit and logistics. The more prepared, the better the event
- Make sure you have the right materials
- Have a back up project that can take place concurrently if too many volunteers attend or a project that only a handful of people can accomplish if too few show up
- Line up experienced volunteers or crew leaders who can manage and help execute the project. Get commitments from experienced volunteers to help lead the event

Communications and Outreach



- Create email list for volunteer opportunities
- Outreach to other user groups to invite them to attend.
- Kiosk posters, newspaper announcements
- Invite VIP guests? Local politician, agency honch
- RSVPs?
- Brief your crew leaders beforehand so they know what they'll need to do
- Be clear in your event announcements about what to wear, what to bring, and what not to bring!

The Big Day Arrives!



Good things to have on hand...



- Coffee and snacks
- Water and energy bars
- Sign in and liability waiver forms
- Park maps
- Extra pairs of work gloves and eye protection
- Oh.. and everything you need for your project: materials and tools!

Orientation



- Be social as people arrive. Introduce yourself and introduce volunteers to each other. Create a friendly and comfortable atmosphere.
- Waiver / Sign In
- Gather everyone around and make formal introductions, perhaps a quick round robin of name, hometown, and why they love the park. Introduce crew leaders.
- Explain the project, why it's important and what people will be doing.
- If the land manager is present, have him or her express a few words of greeting and introduction to the park

Safety Talk

Critical for Risk Management and having a safe event



- Explain the uses and dangers of each of the tools that will be used
- **“Circle of Death.”** This distance should be maintained at the worksite at all times.
- Carry the tool with the “business end” pointed down. One tool, one person
- Ask if anyone has any medical conditions / allergies
- Have first aid kit, cell phone, emergency contact numbers and a protocol for dealing with emergencies

It's never much fun when ambulances come to your event!

Crew Leaders

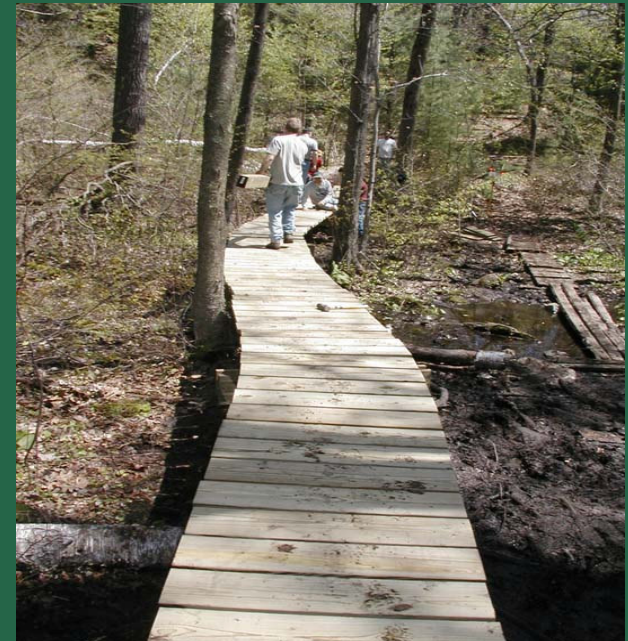


- Developing experienced crew leaders to manage volunteers is key
- CLs should make sure the work flows smoothly, people have what they need and are enjoying themselves. They should manage more than just work
- Work in small groups, each with a leader
- Teach new skills – educate and keep them busy but not overworked
- Motivate and manage – Praise, Appreciation and Respect

Photograph Your Event



- Take before and after shots
- Take some “action” shots
- Create project web pages to inspire others to volunteer
- Use in press releases



Feed Volunteers

Offer some post-event fun



- People will be hungry
- Good time to build relationships and learn more about your volunteers
- Shows appreciation for their work
- Discuss what they liked and how to make the event better
- Let them know other ways they can get involved in your organization
- Take them on a walk or ride
- Today's volunteers could be your group's future leaders

Event Follow-up



- Database volunteer contact and email info. Note any important skills or interests
- Follow up with an email “Thank You” to each volunteer
- Keep track of your volunteer hours.
- Write up a description of the event and what was accomplished
- Report back to land manager
- Send out Press Release
- Create a web page about project (w/ photos)



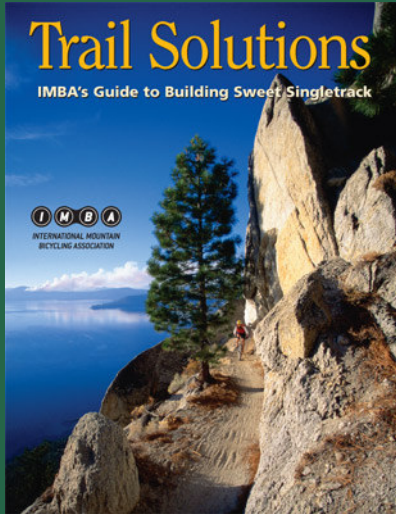
Remember...



- **Keep it fun**
- **Keep it safe**
- **Keep volunteers busy ... but don't work them too hard!**

They'll want to come back for more!

Additional Resources

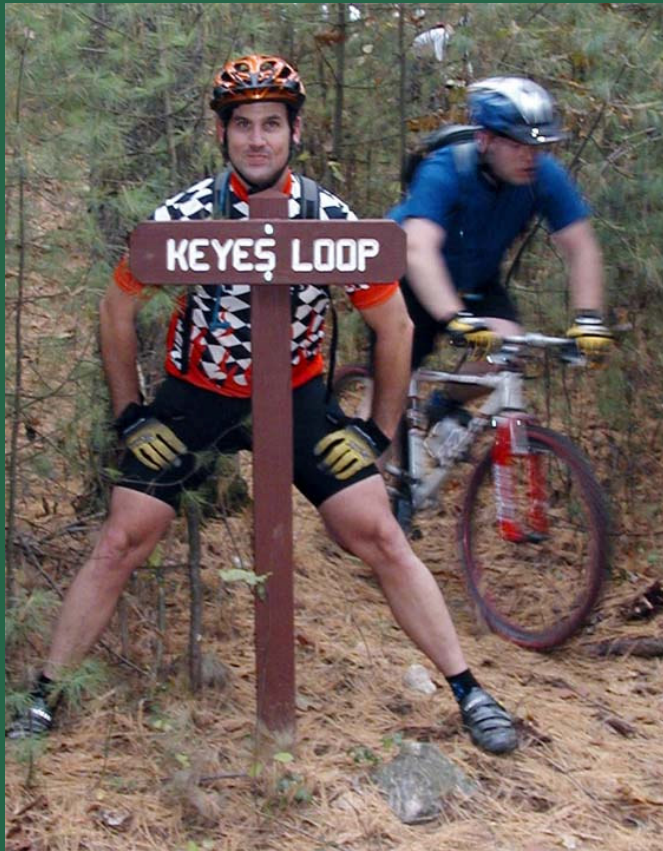


- Trail Solutions: IMBA's Guide to Building Sweet Singletrack. (2004). www.IMBA.com



- American Trails www.AmericanTrails.org (good resource section on volunteers and trail work)

Always at your service:



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